

Wake Me Up (Before You Go-Go) by XxmerthurcatxX

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Angst with a Happy Ending, Coming Out, First Kiss, First Time, Fix It, Fluff, Hurt/Comfort, M/M, Richie Tozier Loves Eddie Kaspbrak, They're both a mess, but it's fine cause they have each other, it's light angst i promise, minor description of injuries, the other losers are not surprised

Language: English

Characters: The Losers Club (IT)

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-10-27

Updated: 2019-12-03

Packaged: 2019-12-18 03:39:24

Rating: Explicit

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 5

Words: 13,898

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Instead of Eddie getting impaled, it's Richie. But he survives and Eddie is there to nurse him back to health. Richie is forced to confront his feelings for his childhood best friend. For once, he can't joke his way out of it.

1. Chapter 1

The first thing he noticed was how blurry everything was. Between the bright lights and the walls that were way too white, he couldn't make out a goddamn thing.

The second thing he noticed was that he couldn't breath. Which was much more alarming than the blurred vision. Blurred vision, he could live with. Lack of oxygen? Not so much.

Richie's throat constricted, his lungs trying to drag in big gulps of air to no avail. Jesus christ, this was it. This was the end. This was how he died. Choking on who the hell knows what, in a room that was so bright it was giving him a headache and--

"We need some help in here!" Someone was yelling. A woman. She sounded frantic and her voice was so *loud* , which was making the ringing in Richie's ears even worse. Wait. Were his ears actually ringing? No, it was more like a rhythmic beeping sound. What the hell was that? A car alarm?

He suddenly stopped giving a fuck what the beeping sound was because now there were people coming into view. At least, he was pretty sure they were people. The whole blurred vision issue has yet to be resolved, so really all he saw were a bunch of fuzzy blobs crowding around him.

One minute, and a hasty tube removal later, Richie was breathing on his own. Things were clicking into place now. He hadn't been able to breathe because he'd been intubated, which he knew meant he wasn't able to breathe on his own when they brought him to what he was

now sure was a hospital. The rhythmic beeping was the heart monitor that he was hooked up to. And the blurred blobs around him, had been a flurry of nurses and one very familiar redhead.

“How’s it hangin, Bev?” Richie asked. His voice was scratchy and he grimaced in pain as he tried to push himself into an upright, seated position.

“Take it easy, Tozier. You don’t want to rip out your stitches.” Beverly was immediately at his side, helping him to sit up and handing him a cup of water with an obnoxiously lime green straw. Richie downed the whole thing, smacking his lips and handing the cup back to Bev. He was about to ask for his glasses because he was sick of not being able to see, but Bev was already sliding them onto his nose.

Richie glanced around the room. Ben was asleep in a chair in the corner. Figures. As a kid he could sleep through anything. Always the first one to fall asleep when they crashed in Bill’s living room and, no matter how loud the rest of them were, he stayed totally zonked out.

It was coming back in bits and pieces as the fog cleared from Richie’s mind and he remembered why exactly he was in the hospital in the first place.

“Bev...did I die?”

He didn’t need to hear the answer. The look on Bev’s face said it all.

Yes.

He died.

He'd been caught in the deadlights. It was horrifying and fucked up and it showed him a million different realities happening simultaneously. But there was one that stuck out in his brain. The one that had seemed the most real. The one he knew was going to happen the second he opened his eyes and found himself face to face with Eddie, who was smiling and shaking him excitedly.

"Rich? Rich! I think I got him! I think I--

Richie didn't think. He fucking moved. In a flash he locked his arms around Eddie's back and flipped their positions, a scream tearing from his throat as the hook like claw went clean through him. He fell forward as the claw retracted, trying to hold himself up on unsteady arms so as not to crush Eddie.

"R-Richie, what--

"S'okay, Eds. M'okay."

Richie was lying and they both knew it. The blood dripping from the hole in his chest was kind of a dead give away. Before his arms could give out, Eddie, with a surprising amount of strength, half carried Richie to a slightly safer spot. He leaned him back against the rocks, running his hands all over Richie's face. Richie was vaguely aware of Eddie yelling at

him to keep his fucking eyes open, but he sounded far away.

I'm dying, Richie thought. I'm fucking dying and I never told him. Richie wanted to tell him right then, but he was so tired and he felt like shit and there was no way he could find the right words. But at least Eddie was alive. Eddie was safe. And if Richie was gonna die in this fucking cave, at least he knew that the boy he'd been in love with for his entire life was gonna live.

Speaking of said boy...

Richie frowned, looking around the room again, like maybe he missed Eddie the first time. He tried to hide the disappointment on his face when he realized he wasn't there.

"Where's--

"Mike and Bill took him back to the Town House," Bev said knowingly, reaching out and putting her hand on top of his. Richie was filled with a sudden and overwhelming burst of love for her. She knew. He was pretty sure she always had and he loved her for never trying to pry it out of him. For never expecting him to say it out loud.

"Is he--

"He's fine. I mean, he's not fine, but he's alive. You should have seen him, Richie. He wouldn't leave you, not for a second. You were out

for three days and he just...stayed. Mike and Bill had to practically drag him out of here today to get him to eat some real food, take a shower, and change his clothes.”

Richie couldn't believe it. The idea of Eddie going even one day without showering was ridiculous, let alone three. He tried not to read too much into it. Skipping a few showers wasn't secret code for “take me now, Richie.” A week ago he hadn't even remembered who Eddie was, but the second he saw him it all came rushing back. How confused he had been when the thought of kissing another boy popped into his head. How scared he had been when he realized the boy he wanted to kiss was Eddie. How his heart had broken into a million pieces when he and Eddie said goodbye before they left for college.

“For fuck's sake, Bill. I left for three hours. Isn't that enough? What more do you want from me, huh? I wanna be here when he wakes up!”

Richie froze. He knew that voice. Bev must have sensed his agitation because she smiled reassuringly and squeezed his hand.

A moment later Eddie came into view. He was looking over his shoulder, still arguing with Bill so he hadn't seen that Richie was in fact awake now.

“Um, Eddie?” Bev said, trying to get the man's attention.

Eddie whipped around, the fire in his eyes immediately dying when he caught sight of Richie. Oh man, if Richie was anxious before, he

was fucking terrified now. The fact that he'd been out for three days certainly didn't help. God, he'd been awake for less than an hour and he was already ready to get out. He needed to move. He needed to--

"You're awake."

Eddie's voice was steady despite how hard Richie could see his hands were shaking. For the first time in his life, Richie was at a loss for words. He was so overwhelmed at seeing Eddie alive and safe, his throat tightened up and he had to bite his lip to stop it from trembling. Bev noticed, because of course she did.

"Right. I'm hungry. Anyone else hungry?" she asked, moving to wake up Ben.

Richie's heart clenched at the dopey smile that spread across Ben's face when he opened his eyes and saw Bev. No one had ever looked at Richie like that, and he was reminded of just how alone he had been for most of his life.

The room cleared out quickly, both Bill and Mike throwing him looks that he knew meant they were happy to see him with his eyes open and not choking on his own blood. They'd be back later, and for that, Richie was grateful.

Eddie hovered awkwardly at the foot of the bed, picking up Richie's chart and scanning it over for a minute.

“Looks, um, looks like you’re gonna be down for the count for a while. I mean, you got run through with a claw so obviously it’s not gonna be, um--Okay, I can’t do this.”

Richie frowned, his confusion momentarily distracting him from the fact that he was two seconds away from tears.

“Can’t do what?”

Eddie shook his head, pacing back and forth now. The fire that had been in his eyes when he first walked in was back full force.

“What the fuck were you thinking? What, you saw Pennywise behind me and thought, I’ll just flip us over and get myself killed--

“I didn’t get myself ki--

“And it’ll be fine. Eddie won’t mind if I’m gone. Eddie won’t freak the fuck out and force his friends to carry me out even though they all think I’m dead,” Eddie was on a tear now. He gripped the edge of Richie’s bad, glaring at him. “Eddie won’t spend *days* not showering, yelling for nurses and doctors to give him an update. It’ll all be fucking fine!”

To say Richie was shocked was an understatement. He hadn’t seen Eddie like this since they were kids. The last few days were so busy, there hadn’t been time for one of Eddie’s famous tangents. The familiarity of it all had Richie sniffing, a soft sob catching in his

throat, and the tears that had been prickling at the corners of his eyes finally spilling over.

Eddie was at his side in an instant, his anger replaced with concern as his hands fluttered over Richie anxiously.

“What? What is it? What hurts? Do you need me to call someone? I can--

Richie reached out weakly. His fingers caught the hem of Eddie’s hoodie, giving it a tug.

“I’m sorry,” he said miserably, using his free hand to scrub impatiently at his tears.

Eddie sighed, sitting on the edge of the bed. He smoothed Richie’s hair back from his forehead and placed his hand over Richie’s where he still clung to Eddie’s hoodie.

“I’m sorry too. I didn’t mean to yell at you. I just...You could have died, Rich.”

Richie nodded.

“I know.”

Eddie shifted around nervously for a second before he seemed to get himself together, a look of determination on his face. He climbed fully into bed next to Richie. He didn't say anything as he curled himself around the other man, careful to avoid where the doctors had patched Richie up.

Richie's heart was beating so fast and he was mortified because the heart monitor was picking up on it, which meant that Eddie knew exactly the effect his closeness was having on him. He tried to think of a joke, but he was still so tired and his brain wasn't firing on all cylinders. Instead, all he could do was focus on Eddie's breath against his neck. Eddie's hand on his chest. Eddie's ankle hooked around Richie's leg.

"Don't scare me like that again," Eddie said seriously.

Richie hesitantly wrapped his arm around Eddie. He felt emboldened when Eddie sighed and snuggled closer. *Cute, cute, cute*. He nuzzled into Eddie's hair, breathing him in. He smelled like shitty hotel soap, but it was a hell of a lot better than sewer water.

"I won't," Richie murmured. "Besides. Your mom would miss me too much if I--"

"Beep beep, Richie."

Richie smiled as his eyes fluttered closed, resting his cheek on top of Eddie's head.

“Okay, Eds.”

2. Chapter Two

Eddie had to leave and Richie was pouting.

He was only going to be gone for a few days. Long enough to go back to New York and get some more of his stuff and then he would be back. So maybe Richie was being dramatic, but the idea of Eddie leaving filled him with dread. What if they forgot each other again? He'd only just gotten Eddie back and he wasn't ready to say goodbye.

It was strange how quickly it came back to him. His feelings for Eddie slammed into him like a goddamn train as he remembered the two of them growing up together. It was easy to fall in love with Eddie back then. It was just as easy now.

Not that he'd told Eddie any of that. In fact, Richie thought it was best to keep that to himself. Forever. He wasn't about to risk telling Eddie and having him freak out and never want to see Richie again.

"When's Eddie coming back again?" Richie asked, wincing as Ben helped to lower him onto the sofa. Ben and Bev, unfairly attractive guardian angels that they were, had helped Richie rent a house in Portland since he wasn't allowed to fly yet. They volunteered to stay with Richie until Eddie got back.

"He left literally six hours ago man," Ben told him.

Richie sighed dramatically, his head lolling back against the couch.

“Gee, thanks,” Bev said, crossing her arms and arching a brow at Richie. “Not like Ben and I love you and are more than capable of taking care of you and keeping your sorry ass company or anything.”

Richie felt a twinge of guilt. It wasn't like he didn't want to spend time with Ben and Bev, but Eddie being gone made his heart ache.

“Now Bev, you know I'm always down for a threeway but--

“But you'd really prefer a two way with you and Eddie,” Ben mumbled under his breath.

Richie's heart stopped. He kind of figured that if Bev knew, so did Ben, but he wasn't expecting...No one had ever said it outloud before. He hadn't even said it out loud before. He thought back to Pennywise taunting him, telling him that his friends would leave him if they knew his deep dark secret. But Bev knew. And so did Ben. And they hadn't left. So maybe...

Bev punched Ben's arm, but he didn't even flinch. Stupid, muscly bastard. Ben stared nervously at him, looking so guilty that Richie knew he should let him off the hook.

“S'okay Benny Boo. We all know I'm a big ol homo. No harm, no foul.”

There. He'd said in. In true Richie fashion, he made a joke out of it, but he'd admitted out loud that he liked men and that had to count for something!

Bev smiled, kissing Richie on the forehead.

"Thanks for telling us," She said.

Richie frowned.

"You already knew."

Bev shrugged.

"Yeah, but I'm still proud of you for saying it. In the most Richie way possible, I might add."

Richie grinned, yelping when Ben plopped down next to him on the couch and pressed a sloppy kiss to his cheek.

"Love you, Rich."

The nice thing about having a near death experience was that Richie didn't have to justify randomly bursting into tears. It just happened sometimes. Like now. Because he had Ben on one side and Bev on the

other and he'd finally admitted not only to himself but two other people that he was gay.

"I haven't cried this much since Eddie moved away and I couldn't fuck his mom anymore," Richie said, still sniffing.

"He's not even here to get offended," Bev said, rolling her eyes. "Although speaking of Eddie--

Richie shook his head.

"No. Nope. We don't need to talk about it."

"Talk about what?" Bev asked innocently.

Richie glared at her.

"You know what."

"Look, Richie. He wouldn't leave your side when you were in the hospital. He's going to New York for like, two days to get his stuff and then he's coming back here to take care of you until you get the all clear to fly back to LA. Don't you think that maybe he--

"He's married," Richie reminded her. Or maybe he was reminding

himself. Probably both.

“Not happily,” Bev said stubbornly.

Richie huffed, shaking his head.

“Doesn’t matter. I’m not that kind of girl, Bev. I know I’d make an awesome mistress, but--

“Promise you’ll think about it. Telling him, I mean. After all we’ve been through, you deserve to be happy. And so does Eddie.”

Now that, Richie one hundred percent agreed with. If there was anyone on the Earth who deserved eternal happiness it was one Edward Kaspbrak. He’d put up with years of abuse from his mother, then married a woman exactly like her and, from the bits and pieces Eddie had shared, it did sound like he was unhappy. But Richie wasn’t nearly as confident as Bev was that the key to Eddie’s happiness lay with him. He came with his own mess of issues. Issues he couldn’t even deal with sometimes, let alone expect someone else--expect *Eddie* to.

“I’ll think about it.”

XXXX

True to his word, Richie did think about it. He could hardly help it.

Thinking about Eddie was one of his favorite past times. He'd done it a lot since they reconnected and even more when he was a teenager. In a small town like Derry, if you weren't fighting a demonic clown, there really wasn't much else to do besides pine after your long time best friend.

And if there was one thing Richie Tozier was good at, it was pining after Eddie Kaspbrak.

Pennywise knew, Richie realized. He'd looked into Richie's mind or heart or soul or whatever the fuck and seen that his deep dark secret ran further than just his sexuality. He was afraid of admitting to himself, to anyone, that he was gay. He afraid to admit that he was gay *for* Eddie. But his biggest fear, on top of all of it, was losing Eddie for good.

God, the thought of losing Eddie, especially after he'd just found him again...It was more than Richie could take. Which was why, when he dreamt of the deadlights, he woke up screaming and covered in sweat.

When Richie woke from the nightmare, disorientated and scared and holy fucking shit, he was back in the sewers. Eddie was dead. He didn't save him. He didn't--

"Shhhh, Richie, it's okay. It was a dream. It's okay."

It took Richie a moment to come back to himself. He was in a bed. It felt unfamiliar. Barely slept in. He let his fingers slowly unclench from the sheets, and flinched when he felt a hand on his cheek. It was

too dark in the room for him to see who it was, not to mention he wasn't wearing his glasses.

"If you're a ghost, you can fuck off," he muttered, his voice hoarse from screaming.

A soft chuckle filled his ears.

"It's okay, Richie. It's just me."

Ben, Richie realized, some of the tension easing out of his shoulders. Richie grabbed for Ben's hand, giving it a squeeze.

"Sorry I woke you. Is Bev up too?"

Ben snorted.

"Hell no. I'm pretty sure she could sleep through anything. I can get her though. I mean, if you'd rather talk to her about whatever you were dreaming about? I can guess, but uh, she's the only other one of us who got caught in the deadlights so she'd probably understand a lot better than--

"Just get up here and hug me, Haystack," Richie grumbled, tugging at Ben's shirt.

“Right, hugging I can totally handle.”

Ben climbed up onto the bed, tucking himself in behind Richie and looping an arm around his waist, careful to avoid his stitches. For the first time since Eddie left, Richie felt himself relax a little. He'd always liked Ben. From the minute he'd joined the losers. “ *I'm glad I got to meet you before you died* ,” he had told him. It was ill timed, considering Ben was gross and bleeding after an attack from Henry, but the sentiment behind it was true.

“This is pretty gay,” Richie said suddenly, smiling when Ben laughed.

“Shut up, Richie. I know it's not as good as having Eddie here, but I've been told I'm a pretty good cuddler. So, I'm here. Whenever you need me.”

Richie absolutely did not get choked up at that. Nope. He was just sleep deprived and sore and out of his mind thinking about--Richie fell asleep on his next exhale.

xxxx

The next morning, Richie woke from the best night's sleep he had had in awhile. Ben was right, he was a good cuddler.

“Do we wake them up?”

“Not without a picture.”

Richie’s eyes flew open. He knew that voice.

Eddie!

He scrambled for his glasses, shoving them onto his face so fast he almost poked himself in the eye. Eddie was leaning against the door, an amused look on his face. Bev was behind him, phone in hand, pointed directly at Richie. Oh fuck, he’d forgotten Ben was still spooning him.

“This isn’t what it looks like!” he spazzed, trying and failing to drag himself out of Ben’s hold.

“Easy, you’re gonna hurt yourself. You’ve still got stitches,” Ben grumbled, snuggling closer.

“He’s not a morning person,” Bev giggled, watching them fondly.

Eddie tapped his chin thoughtfully.

“Gotta say Rich, I had you pegged as a big spoon.”

Richie was mortified, once again pushing at one of Ben's unnecessarily massive biceps to try to get him to relinquish his hold.

"I'm not the little spoon! I'm the big spoon! I swear, I'll prove it! I'll show you my dick! No one with a dick this big could be the little spoon!"

Bev was laughing so hard she had to lean on Eddie for support. Not that it did much help, since the man in question was also losing his shit. Even Ben had started chuckling, his shoulders shaking against Richie's back.

Richie finally managed to get himself out of Ben's grip, since he was distracted laughing his ass off, and shakily got to his feet.

"Fuck all of you."

He winced, hand tentatively covering his side. Fuck, getting run through with a demon clown claw really hurt.

Eddie stopped laughing abruptly and moved to Richie's side.

"Are you okay? Anything hurt? When was the last time you changed your bandages? Have you--

"Calm down, Eddie. Ben and I took care of him for you, I promise," Bev said, moving around Richie to drag Ben out of bed.

Eddie blushed, worrying his bottom lip between his teeth. Richie's heart swelled with a ridiculous amount of affection. Three days without Eddie and his unfairly cute nervous habits and Richie had clearly been going through withdrawal. He tried, and failed, to get his rapidly beating heart to calm down, sure that if it beat any louder Eddie would hear it.

"Not to ditch out the second you get back, but Ben and I really have to get going. Lots of things to sort out at work and...home," Bev said. She looked overwhelmed at the prospect of the difficult ride she was about to go on, but when Ben laced their fingers together and pressed a kiss to her temple, she smiled.

Richie gagged and rolled his eyes pointedly, earning him a middle finger from the red head.

"S'okay, Bev. We understand. Wanna get out of here so you can have Ben all to yourself," Richie teased.

Bev huffed and shook her head, but pulled Richie into a hug anyway. She pressed her lips close to Richie ear, whispering so only he could hear.

"Tell him. You owe it to yourself to be happy."

Richie nodded, kissing her cheek as he pulled away. He wasn't going to cry this time, as hard as it was to say goodbye. They'd see each other again. No doubt there would be an engagement announcement

in the group text pretty soon. Considering they were already forty and Ben had wanted to marry Bev since they were kids, it was really only a matter of time. So, with the thought of a Losers reunion at their wedding on the horizon, Richie wasn't as sad to see them go.

"So, Eds," Richie started, plopping down on the couch in the living room as soon as Ben and Bev had left. "Didja miss me?"

Eddie sat down next to him with a sigh, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Guess not," Richie laughed, trying to hide that he was actually hurt by the response.

"No, no, I did. I miss you," Eddie said hurriedly. "I just...I'm getting a divorce."

Richie's eyes went wide. A million different jokes popped into his head, but none of them came out of his mouth. Which was probably for the best, since Eddie was clearly feeling vulnerable. Not that that had stopped Richie in the past. Making shitty jokes at inappropriate times was kind of his thing. He liked to think, deep down, that all of the Losers appreciated it. Because when everything went to shit, they could always count on Richie to be the same, wisecracking idiot who never shut up.

"I'm sorry, Eds. Are you--

“I’m okay. I’m--I’m better than okay. Fuck, this is the best I’ve felt in a long time and I know that’s terrible, but it’s not like Myra and I were the picture of a happy healthy marriage. She was...she was so much like my mom and I didn’t even see it until I reconnected with you--a-and the rest of the Losers. I told her I was done wasting my life. After everything, I just, I can’t go back and pretend that I’m happy when I’m not.”

Eddie paused in his rant, trying to catch his breath. Richie expected him to pull out an inhaler and take a couple of puffs. He didn’t. Instead, he closed his eyes and let his head fall onto Richie’s shoulder, breathing in and out nice and slow until he felt okay again.

Richie put a careful hand on Eddie’s knee, his stomach flipping when Eddie placed a hand over his.

“I’m such a mess,” Eddie grumbled. “Free for the first time at forty years old and I have no fucking clue what to do with my life.”

Richie snorted.

“Yeah, well, join the club. I, uh, I’ve been thinking about writing my own material. That is, if I still have a job when I’m all healed up,” Richie mused, realizing he should probably put a call in to his manager to let him know that he was in fact, still alive. “And hey, while you figure it out, I’ve got a spare room. I mean, the doc said I’m not allowed to fly for a few more weeks and I don’t know if you want to stick around that long or if you’re even interested but--

Eddie pressed a soft kiss to Richie’s cheek and yeah, Richie’s brain

short circuited.

“Thanks Richie.”

Richie nodded, swallowing hard. Maybe Bev was right. Maybe he could tell Eddie and maybe the world wouldn't explode. He didn't need to come out with some over the top love confession. He could start small. *You owe it to yourself.*

“You're welcome...hey, Eds?”

Eddie sat up to look at Richie, a small smile on his face.

“Yeah?”

“I'm...I'm gay.”

3. Chapter Three

Notes for the Chapter:

Okay, a lot of ground is covered in this chapter and I know it's probs a little rushed but this was supposed to be a oneshot before it ran away from me lol <3
The E rating will kick in in the next chapter!

Richie had imagined a million different scenarios about his coming out. Scenarios that were specific to how Eddie would react. Not that he didn't care what his other friends would think, hell when he was a kid he thought they would all hate him. But it was Eddie's reaction. Eddie's opinion of him, that mattered the most.

The first time Richie thought about telling Eddie that he liked boys, he was thirteen. They had parked their bikes at the kissing bridge and were pitching stones over the side of it into the water, bitching about Bowers and shooting the shit. Richie was cracking joke after joke, trying to keep Eddie's attention on him and off the carvings in the bridge. He was terrified that Eddie would catch sight of the "R + E" that Richie had carved when his feelings for his best friend were too much and he just needed to fucking do something, no matter how small it was.

He'd distracted Eddie from looking at any of the carvings and the two had ridden their bikes back to Richie's for a sleepover. Richie lay awake that night, long after Eddie had fallen asleep, and thought about how nice it would be to not hide. To not spend so much time and energy keeping a part of himself hidden from his best friend. And not just Eddie, the whole Losers club.

But he was scared. So scared that they would hate him. That *Eddie* would hate him. That he would look at him with disgust on his face,

call Richie a fag, and never talk to him again.

Other days, when he was feeling good and the self loathing wasn't so strong, he thought it might not be so bad to tell them. That maybe they would hug him and tell him they still loved him and that it was okay that he liked boys because he was still Richie and that's what mattered.

Out of the hundreds of scenarios he ran through in his head, Richie couldn't have predicted the look on Eddie's face. He looked...betrayed.

"Beep-beep, Richie," Eddie said. His voice was small. Smaller than Richie had ever heard it. Eddie wasn't quiet. Eddie was loud and bratty and he always called Richie on his shit.

Richie fought against the hurt and confusion swelling in his chest.

"Eddie, I--

"I know that you like to make jokes, but I swear to god Richie, this one isn't fucking funny." Eddie got to his feet, pointedly avoiding Richie's eye.

"It's not--jesus christ, Eddie I'm not fucking joking. You think I'd joke about something like this?" Richie asked. He wasn't angry. Not really. Disappointed more like. That Eddie would think so little of him.

Eddie shook his head.

“I don’t know how you found out. I-I don’t know how you know, but this isn’t something you can joke about. Not with me.” Eddie looked like he was on the verge of a panic attack at this point. His hands were shaking, and his breathing was laboured. If Richie wasn’t going through something similar himself, he would be worried that Eddie was about to have an asthma attack. However fake his asthma might be, his body had faked the symptoms for so long, Richie knew was the look for.

“Found out? Eddie, what the hell are you talking about? I-I’m trying to come out to you because you’re my best friend and you’re taking care of me until I got better even though you have a job and a wife back in New York! Although I’m not so sure about that last one because you came back without a wedding ring, don’t think I didn’t notice!” Richie spazzed. He wanted to jump to his feet. He wanted to pace back and forth because he was going crazy sitting still, but his chest still hurt like a motherfucker since he’d been run through with a fucking demon clown claw.

Eddie opened his mouth to say something, but Richie cut him off. He was on a roll now.

“Do you have any idea how scared I was? I was a gay kid in the eighties and I wanted so badly to tell you. To tell everyone, but I couldn’t. I fucking couldn’t. And now here I am, laying it all out for you because I finally have the balls to do it, and all you can say is, beep beep Richie!”

He didn't cry, but it was a close thing. Richie's whole body was vibrating with the effort to keep the tears at bay as he clenched and unclenched his fists against his knees.

"I'm...I'm gay, Eds," Richie said again, his voice a little shaky.

Eddie practically tripped over himself in his haste to get to Richie, falling to his knees in front of the other man and pulling him into a hug that was probably too fierce for his stitches to handle. But Richie didn't care. He tucked his face into the curve of Eddie's neck, wrapping his arms around Eddie's smaller frame, and holding him back just as fiercely.

Eddie was murmuring apology after apology into Richie's hair, his lips pressed against the other man's temple.

"I'm sorry. God, Richie, I'm so sorry. I-I thought, I mean, I didn't think---

Richie hushed him, rubbing Eddie's back in an attempt to soothe his shaking body. Eddie pulled back, just a little, his own eyes wet with unshed tears.

"I thought you knew. I-I thought maybe Bev told you and I panicked. And now I feel bad because of course Bev didn't tell you, she'd never do that but I wasn't thinking rationally and--

"Whoa, slow down Spaghetti Man. Still in the dark here. What

exactly did you think Bev told me?” Richie asked.

Eddie looked nervous. More nervous than Richie had ever seen him, and that worried him. What could be so bad that Eddie didn’t want to tell him?

“I am too. Gay I mean,” Eddie said quickly.

Richie swore his heart stopped beating for a solid minute. Thirteen year old Richie would be punching the air and letting out a ridiculous “whooping” with the knowledge that his Eddie Spaghetti liked boys too. Forty year old Richie was more cautious. Part of him wanted to do his thirteen year old self proud and scream from the rooftops how happy he was. But another part of him, the very small part of his brain that dealt with rationality, reminded him that just because Eddie was gay it didn’t mean that he was gay for Richie.

“Well I’ll be,” Richie said, gearing up for a joke. He’d changed a lot over the last twenty seven years, but if the fact that he was a famous comedian was anything to go by, he still used humor as a coping mechanism. “A couple of middle aged queers, taking down demon clowns and still finding time for a witty repartee? There’s a screenplay in there somewhere.”

Eddie didn’t laugh. Instead, he pushed himself to his feet and circled the coffee table, picking up the bags he’d left there and heading down the hall towards his room.

“I’m gonna unpack. Um, call if you need anything.”

Richie nodded, even though he knew that Eddie couldn't see him.

"Hey Eds?!" he said, his voice this side of too loud.

"Yeah?"

Eddie's voice was small again. Richie found he hated it. Eddie should never sound like that. Ever.

"Are we good?"

He wasn't even sure what he was asking. There was a pit in his stomach. The kind he always got when he thought he'd fucked something up beyond repair. Maybe that was just a side effect of coming out to your childhood best friend/long time crush. Richie made a mental note to google the symptoms of coming out of the closet at forty.

"Yeah," Eddie called back. "We're good."

XXXXXX

It seemed like Eddie was cool with pretending that nothing had happened. He and Richie fell back into their routine, which consisted mostly of Eddie fussing over Richie's wounds and making sure that he

didn't overexert himself.

Richie was grateful that their relationship hadn't changed.

Except that it had.

On the surface it was the same, but now that Richie knew that Eddie liked guys, his brain was on a constant loop of "what if, what if, what if." What if every touch that lingered a little too long meant what Richie wanted it to mean? What if they could stay like this forever, together? What if Eddie loved him back?

So there he was, days after he and Eddie had come out to each other, laying awake at some stupidly late hour and staring at his ceiling. He was replaying the moment he had fallen asleep with his head on Eddie's shoulder hours earlier. How he'd woken up with Eddie's fingers in his hair and his lips pressed to his temple. It was nice. Really nice. But it didn't mean anything. It didn't, because what Eddie had said was "I'm gay" not "I love you Richie, take me now." It didn't--

"Richie?"

The man in question flinched so hard he wrenched his shoulder, groaning in pain. He turned toward the door, squinting in the dark. Obviously it was Eddie standing there, but he couldn't see a damn thing.

“Eds? You okay?”

Eddie shifted awkwardly by the door before coming closer.

“I-I’m...” he trailed off, a soft hiccup leaving his throat as Richie realized with something akin to mortification, that Eddie was crying. Oh, hell no. Not on his watch.

“Whoa, hey, Eddie, what’s wrong? Wait, come here, or turn the light on or something, I can’t see you like, at all man,” Richie said, already fumbling for his glasses that were sitting safely on his bedside table.

Richie slipped his glasses onto his face and was about to turn on his lamp when Eddie launched himself across the room and straight into Richie’s arms. He clung to Richie like his life depended on it, tears soaking into Richie’s shirt as sobs wracked his body.

“ *Richie* ,” Eddie sniffled, murmuring the other man’s name over and over again.

“Oh, hey, it’s okay,” Richie said, sliding an arm around Eddie’s back. “It’s okay, Eds. Whatever it is, it’s okay. I’m here. I’ve got you.” He tried not to dwell on how gay that sounded, taking solace in the fact that Eddie seemed to be coming back to himself, though he didn’t relinquish his hold on Richie.

“Do you wanna talk about it?” Richie asked. It was a nightmare. It had to have been. Richie recognized the signs easily; heavy

breathing, body quaking, covered head to toe in sweat.

Eddie inhaled deeply a few times, looking up at Richie with big weepy eyes that Richie could only see because they were pressed so close together.

“Four minutes and eight seconds”

Richie frowned.

“What?”

“You were dead for four minutes and eight seconds.” Eddie was trembling, his fingers curled tight into the fabric of Richies t shirt.

“Eddie—

“The second your heart stopped, mine did too. I was sitting next to you in the ambulance with a death grip on your wrist, searching for your fucking pulse because I didn’t want to believe it. You weren’t dead. You couldn’t be.”

Richie swallowed hard, willing the lump that was forming in his throat to go away. It doesn’t mean anything, it doesn’t mean anything, it doesn’t--

“I love you.”

The floor felt like it was ripped out from under him. The world was upside fucking down. Richie had to be dreaming because there was no way Eddie had just said--

“I love you,” Eddie said again, a little more sure of himself this time.

Again! He said it again! And Richie was definitely awake, because if he was dreaming his shoulder wouldn't be hurting so badly.

Eddie tucked his chin to his chest when Richie remained silent, unaware that his best friend was halfway to a brain aneurysm and expecting the worst. “Sorry. God, I'm sorry. The last thing you want is for me to drop this on you right now. I was just scared. I dreamt that you didn't make it and I panicked because I almost let you die without telling you how I felt back then. How I *still* feel now. Can...can we pretend I didn't say anything?”

Richie could feel Eddie starting to pull away and it jolted him into action.

“Remember when I used to joke about fucking your mom?” he blurted.

Eddie paused, his fingers twitching where they still rested against Richie's side.

“Uh...yeah?”

“The one I really wanted to fuck was you!”

Eddie's head shot up, his mouth falling open in surprise. Oh shit. Richie groaned, rolling away from Eddie and pressing the heels of his hands into his eyes.

“Oh god, that's now how that was supposed to come out. I mean, I meant it, totally wanted to fuck you. Still do, obviously. But-but I should have said, I should have led with--

Eddie rolled on top of Richie, careful not to put any weight on his injury.

“Richie,” he said softly, fingers circling Richie's wrists and tugging his hands away from his face. “Are you saying what I think you're saying?”

Richie blushed.

“Do you think I'm saying that I'm so in love with you it makes me act like a total nut job, because if that's what you think I'm saying then yes,” he said quickly.

Eddie smiled. He let go of Richie's wrists, cupping the other man's face in both hands and leaning in close to brush their noses together.

"Eds," Richie breathed. He couldn't believe this was happening. There was more they should talk about. So much more. But it could wait. They had time. Richie smiled at the thought. *They had time.*

"Did you ever think we'd get here?" Eddie murmured, his lips so close to Richie's they brushed together as he spoke.

Richie shook his head, sliding his hand up Eddie's chest all the way up to rest on the back of his neck.

"Never."

Then Eddie was closing the last bit of distance between them, kissing Richie softly on the mouth.

Richie's brain short circuited...again.

4. Chapter Four

The problem, Richie was quick to figure out, with being madly in love with your childhood best friend who grew up to be a risk analyst, was that said best friend had a bulleted fucking list of reasons why it was a bad idea for he and Richie to have sex while his injury was still healing. Eddie had spent his formative years in and out of the hospital because of his overbearing mother, which meant he was well versed in proper medical care. On the one hand, Richie appreciated being cared for so thoroughly. On the other hand...he was horny.

It could hardly be helped. He'd been thinking about sex with Eddie since before he fully understood what sex *was*. Hell, the first time he'd woken up from a wet dream, it had been about Eddie. That led to a very confusing couple of months that mostly consisted of Richie avoiding being alone with Eddie because he was embarrassed. He'd spent years keeping his feelings under lock and key, first because he thought there was no hope that Eddie loved him back, and then because he had to go and forget the other man for twenty seven years.

Now he had him. Eddie was finally his. And he couldn't do a damn thing about it.

"Come on, Eddie. I'll lay here and you can do all the work. That way there'll be no danger of me ripping me stitches out," Richie reasoned, pawing at the shorter man.

Eddie huffed and shook his head. He rolled on top of Richie, stilling his hands that were still sliding up Eddie's thighs, and fixing him with a look.

“Absolutely not. I’m not risking it, Rich. When I watched you bleeding out in a cave, I thought you were gone for good. I’m not gonna take the chance and have you aggravate your injury and hinder your recovery just cause you wanna get your rocks off.”

Richie pouted, but he knew that once Eddie set his mind to something, there was no changing it. It was one of the many things he loved about the other man. Besides, even if they couldn’t have sex, he still got to have Eddie close to him; dropping kisses on the top of his head when he refilled Richie’s coffee mug, tugging Richie against his side when they were on the couch watching some shitty show on Netflix, and laughing with his head thrown back when Richie cracked a joke that he genuinely found funny. Yeah, Richie was fine with the way things were.

If only his dick got the memo.

Eddie touched him so often and with such a level of intimacy that Richie was having a hard time getting his dick to behave. He hadn’t had this much trouble since he was a teenager. Hell, he was forty! He should have better self control than this. But sometimes Eddie would kiss the back of Richie’s neck when they were curled up in bed late at night and his fingers would slip just under the hem of Richie’s shirt, and yeah, Richie was getting hard just thinking about it.

Eddie had still been asleep when Richie carefully slid out of his arms and headed to the bathroom to take a shower. It was supposed to be a cold shower, but Richie was already hard and Eddie was in the other room, so he didn’t see the harm in having a little personal time. He was just thankful that at this point Eddie had given him the okay to shower with his stitches, because he was getting really sick of

baths. Plus it wasn't practical to jerk off in a bathtub. Harder to, uh, hide the evidence.

He started slow, running his hand over his chest, careful to avoid his stitches. Eddie liked to touch Richie's chest when they made out. Something Richie loved. He gave his nipple a quick pinch, barely stifling a groan. Eddie was a light sleeper. Not to mention he might as well have supersonic hearing. No matter where Richie was in the house, if he was singing under his breath or eating something he shouldn't be, Eddie yelled from wherever he was to tell him to knock it off.

Richie curled his fingers around his cock, giving himself a stroke or two to get warmed up. He remembered Eddie's hand resting on his thigh while he read some book Richie had never heard of. Thought about Eddie's lips pressed to his temple when he thought Richie was sleeping. Richie slapped his hand against the wall of the shower, resting his forehead against it as his fist flew over his dick, faster, and faster and--

"Richie?"

The squeak that left Richie's lips, he would deny until his dying day.

"Y-yeah, Eds?" he asked, hoping Eddie wouldn't notice how strained his voice was.

"You mind if I brush my teeth?"

Richie nodded, then realized he was an idiot because obviously Eddie couldn't see him.

"Sure thing," he called back.

Richie tried to keep his breathing steady as Eddie entered the bathroom. He realized with a jolt that his hand was still on his dick. He swallowed hard. He couldn't keep going with Eddie right there...could he?

Okay, so he didn't intend to jerk off with Eddie in the same room, but the thought alone made him even harder. Richie worried his bottom lip between his teeth as he picked up his strokes again, nice and slow this time. He whimpered softly, unable to help himself.

"You okay in there?" Eddie asked.

"Y-yeah, I'm good. Just, uh, brushed against my stitches by mistake." It was a stupid lie, but Richie figured it was believable enough. Better than telling Eddie the truth about what he was doing.

"Well be careful. I'll check them for you when you're done, make sure you didn't do any damage."

"Sounds good, Eds," Richie said, squeezing his eyes shut as he swiped his thumb over the head of his dick. Fuck, that was good. God, he was so close. He was gonna come with Eddie on the other side of the curtain. *Fuck* .

“Oh and I left a pair of clean pajamas for you on the counter by the sink so make sure you--

Richie moaned.

He knew he'd fucked up the second the sound came out. There was no mistaking that one for a sound of pain. It was an honest to god moan. There was no way Eddie hadn't heard it. No way Eddie didn't know what Richie was doing.

Eddie was silent for a long, horrifying, moment.

“Rich...are you...are you *jerking off* ?”

The mood effectively killed by the panic attack Richie was working himself up into, he finally let go of his dick.

“I-I was...yeah,” he finished lamely.

“Oh--okay yeah that's, uh, I'm gonna....” Eddie trailed off and a second later Richie heard the bathroom door slam shut.

He let his head fall forward against the wall, twisting the knob to cold, as if his dick hadn't already gone soft. Part of him wanted to stay under the spray of the shower forever. It seemed more preferable

than facing Eddie after this. Richie knew he was being dramatic, but he was more embarrassed than he was after his first wet dream and that was saying something. Because this time Eddie *knew* .

Since it wasn't actually an option to stay in the shower forever, Richie turned off the water and stepped shakily onto the bathmat. He took his time drying off and rewrapping his wound. He couldn't do as well as Eddie, but he deemed his work passable and carefully pulled on the t shirt Eddie had left. He contemplated going as far as to blow dry his hair, but he didn't want it to be obvious that he was stalling. Eventually, he'd have to face Eddie. After a couple of deep breaths, and a very embarrassing self pep talk, Richie opened the door.

He'd expected the bedroom to be empty. Instead, Eddie was sitting on the side of the bed, flipping through a magazine that Richie had left sitting on the bedside table. Now would be the perfect time to crack a joke, Richie thought. He could diffuse some of the tension. Maybe--

"Please don't make a stupid joke right now."

Eddie's voice made Richie jump. Right, okay, no jokes. Which meant that Eddie probably wanted to *talk* about this. Richie wondered how it was possible that he survived being attacked by a sadistic alien clown monster, but was probably going to die from utter humiliation. Again. Probably a little dramatic.

"Listen, Eds, I--

"Come here," Eddie said, setting the magazine down and finally looking at Richie.

Richie's brow furrowed in confusion. Not what he expected, but he wasn't about to argue. He slowly made his way over to Eddie, stopping when he was standing right in front of him. Eddie looped his arms around Richie's waist. He sighed, resting his forehead against Richie's stomach.

"You're really testing my resolve here, Rich." His voice was muffled by the fabric of Richie's t-shirt, but it was still enough to make the other man blush.

"So you're not...mad?" Richie asked, tentatively running his fingers through Eddie's hair.

Eddie glanced up at him, cocking a brow.

"You thought I would be mad at you for jerking off?" he asked.

Richie's blush darkened.

"Well I don't know! You high tailed it out of there pretty fast."

It was Eddie's turn to blush as he hid his face in Richie's shirt again.

"Not my fault. Blood rushed to my dick so fast I got dizzy and had to sit down," Eddie mumbled.

Richie would have laughed if he hadn't felt a rush of desire, his dick starting to get hard again in his pajama pants. He tried to calm himself down, considering Eddie was almost level with his dick at this point, so one wrong move and he'd notice Richie's little problem. Well...not little.

"Speaking of awkward boners," Eddie said, smirking up at Richie. Oh great. He noticed. Richie was about to respond when Eddie lifted the hem of his t-shirt, just enough that he could press kisses above the waistband of his pajama pants. Richie shivered when Eddie's tongue snaked out to lick at one of his hip bones.

"E-Eds, I thought you said we couldn't--

"Fuck it," Eddie growled and oh, that was doing things to Richie he didn't even know here possible.

Richie was putty in Eddie's hands, allowing the other man to pull him onto the bed and flip him onto his back, before he crawled over him. Things were escalating quickly, but Richie couldn't find it in himself to care. He was past the point of thinking with his upstairs brain as he curled his fingers into the collar of Eddie's shirt and dragged him in for a kiss that made his head spin.

Eddie moaned softly against his lips, his tongue nudging against Richie's as he deepened the kiss. It had surprised Richie the first time Eddie kissed him with tongue. Considering the other man was a germaphobe, he figured he'd draw the line at letting his tongue touch Richie's. But there he was, licking into Richie's mouth, the slide of their lips becoming desperate the more turned on they got.

When Eddie started to rock his hips down against Richie's, the other man broke the kiss with a gasp.

"W-wait," Richie stuttered.

Eddie was off him in an instant.

"What? What's wrong? Did I lean on your stitches by mistake? Shit, I was supposed to help you rewrap when you got out of the shower. I'm--

"Whoa, take a breath, baby, I'm good," Richie promised, smiling softly at the way Eddie's cheeks went pink at the use of the pet name. "My wrapping skills aren't at Kaspbrak level, but I think I did a pretty good job."

Eddie nodded.

"Then...why did you wanna stop?"

Richie huffed, running a hand down his face.

"Cause I was about to come in my pants and I didn't want you to bitch at me about needing to do laundry and--

Eddie gave him a light smack on the shoulder, but he was laughing so Richie knew he wasn't really that annoyed.

"Come on, Rich. Be serious."

"I *am* serious! I've wanted this for so long, Eds. Pretty sure I'm gonna go off like a fucking rocket the second you touch me." Richie admitted. He would have been mortified by his own admission, if it wasn't for the way Eddie was looking at him and god, all Richie wanted was to be *touched* but he didn't want it to be over before it started.

A thought popped into his head.

"You could finger me!" he blurted.

Eddie's jaw dropped, his eyes going wide. Uh oh.

Richie started backtracking immediately.

"I-I mean you don't have to. It was just an idea to make it last longer cause uh, it usually takes a little longer for me to... *finish* if I...Jesus Christ, I don't know what I was thinking. It's way too soon for that. I haven't even sucked your dick yet. Blowjobs should definitely come before fingering--

“Richie.”

“Oh my God, it just occurred to me how gross the idea of fingering someone must be for you. I’m sure you’ve got a rant or two about hygiene on that one, huh Eds?” Richie was rambling and he couldn’t seem to stop.

Lucky for him, Eddie cut him off, taking Richie’s face in his hands and kissing him soundly to get him to shut up. *Well played Spaghetti, well played.*

“Let’s get one thing straight,” Eddie said when he pulled away. “Sex is gross.”

Richie frowned, but Eddie kept talking before he could get a word in.

“There are so many fluids and the whole thing is always way too messy and then there’s the clean up, ugh. So yeah, sex is gross,” Eddie said, but he smiled, reaching forward to pluck Richie’s glasses off his face and set them safely on the bedside table. “But you know what, so are you.”

“Hey!” Richie spluttered indignantly.

“Don’t you get it, Rich? I’ve known you were gross since the day we met. You tripped and scraped your knees and you didn’t even use disinfectant or clean out the gravel before you slapped on a bandaid.

That's fucking disgusting. And you haven't changed. Yesterday you took the orange juice out of the fridge and took a swig straight from the carton and you never use a napkin, you just fuckin, lick the food off your fingers," Eddie's nose was wrinkled in actual disgust and Richie was starting to feel offended, but then Eddie was brushing his knuckles over his cheek and smiling again. "You're fuckin gross, Tozier. And for some reason I still want to kiss you like, all the time."

Richie was pretty sure his heart was going to beat out of his chest.

"So we can do whatever you want, okay? It's not gonna gross me out. I mean, it might a little bit, but it'll be fine and I'll still enjoy it because it's *you* ."

Richie leaned up on his elbows, nudging Eddie's nose with his own.

"I really love you, Eds," he said, surprised by how steady his voice was. Halfway through Eddie's little speech he'd started getting choked up. But he didn't want to cry and ruin the mood.

"I really love you too, Richie," Eddie said, kissing his soft and sweet before pulling back with a grin. "Now, how about we get you out of these pants?"

Richie nodded eagerly, because that sounded like the best idea in the world. He let Eddie push him back so he was laying flat again, his breath catching when Eddie hooked his thumbs under the band of his pajama pants. Eddie kissed at his stomach as he slid his pants down, dropping kisses on the newly exposed skin of Richie's thighs, pausing

only to finish tugging them off the rest of the way.

His eyes landed on Richie's dick, going a little wide.

"Are you fucking kidding me?!" he spazzed.

Richie glanced down at himself. Nothing looked out of the ordinary. Then again, he wasn't wearing his glasses.

"What? What's the matter?" he asked, worried he might have some weird growth or something.

Eddie shook his head.

"Nothing. Nothing, I just...all those jokes about having a big dick, I figured you were overcompensating but, jesus christ your dick is huge."

Richie smirked. Yeah, he knew exactly what he was packing.

"Oh, I never joke about my dick Eddie Spaghetti."

Eddie rolled his eyes, grumbling under his breath and making Richie's heart swell with fondness because honestly Eddie being indignant about the size of his dick was endearing as fuck. His nerves

had been momentarily forgotten, but they returned full force when Eddie snagged the lube out of the top drawer of the bedside table. Richie tried not to wonder how Eddie knew it was there.

“Eddie, have you done this before?” he asked.

The other man blushed, biting his bottom lip. His eyes met Richie’s and he nodded.

“Yeah, yeah I’ve...not since college. And back then it wasn’t, well, it wasn’t like how it is now. I-I don’t think I’ve ever been able to really let myself go and enjoy it before because I’ve never wanted anyone as much as I want you.”

Richie groaned, squeezing his eyes shut and covering his face with his hands.

“You can’t keep saying shit like that, Eds. My heart can’t fucking take it.”

Eddie laughed softly, nudging Richie’s legs apart. They moved together until Eddie had his knees under Richie’s thighs. He leaned down to press a kiss to the inside of Richie’s knee, smoothing his hands over his legs, trying to get the other man to loosen up a little.

“You sure about this?” Eddie asked.

Richie sighed, finally taking his hands away from his face.

“Yeah. Yeah, I-I like being fingered. A lot. I’m just nervous cause this time it’s you.”

Eddie hummed, uncapping the lube and squeezing a generous amount onto his fingers.

“I’m gonna make it good for you, Rich. I promise. But you’ve gotta relax for me, okay?”

Richie nodded, taking a few deliberately slow breaths.

“Okay. I’m ready. Do your worst, Kaspbrak.”

Eddie shook his head fondly, his hand sliding down between Richie’s legs. He teased his finger against Richie’s rim before slowly pushing past the tight ring of muscles.

Richie gasped, his hand fisting into the comforter at his side.

It wasn’t like Richie was a slut or anything...okay, fine, maybe he had a bit of a slutty phase in his thirties when he started coming to terms with his sexuality. He was still very very deep in the closet. But that didn’t mean he didn’t have needs. So, yeah, anonymous hookups were kind of his go to for a while. But it had never felt like this. None of them had been this fucking gentle. Like he was something that

mattered. Before it was just about fucking and finding release. But this...as cheesy as it sounded, this was love.

Eddie was *loving* him...by sticking his fingers in Richie's ass, but still!

He took his time, getting Richie used to one finger before he added another, taking care when he did something Richie liked, to do it again and again and again, until Richie's thighs were shaking. The sounds that Eddie coaxed out of him were nothing short of humiliating. When Eddie curled his fingers just right, Richie cried out. His hand flew back to grip the headboard as he rocked down in time with every thrust of Eddie's fingers.

"O-oh, fuck," he moaned, getting desperate. He'd been worked up since he woke up and now Eddie was *finally* touching him and fuck, he needed to come.

Eddie hooked Richie's knee over his shoulder, pressing closer so he could get a better angle. His fingers were so deep, still moving just shy of too slow, a delicious torture that Richie didn't know he needed until now.

"M'gonna come," Richie slurred inelegantly, reaching for his dick with the hand that wasn't holding the headboard. "Eddie, o-oh, god, *Eddie, Eddie, Eddie* --

"That's it, sweetheart. Come for me," Eddie murmured and apparently that was all Richie needed because half a dozen strokes later he was coming, mouth dropping open with a broken cry.

Through the haze of his truly mind blowing orgasm, Richie managed to catch the punched out groan that Eddie let out, the shorter man falling forward so that his head rested against Richie's hip.

"That was...good," Richie said stupidly.

Eddie hummed in agreement, pushing himself back up and smiling dopily at Richie, who suddenly realized that while he'd just had the best orgasm of his life, he hadn't done anything to reciprocate.

"You need me to..." Richie trailed off, gesturing vaguely to Eddie's crotch.

Eddie blushed.

"N-no I, uh, already," he paused, wincing and adjusting the front of his pants, where Richie could now see a very obvious wet spot forming. Holy. Fucking. Shit.

"I didn't even touch you," Richie said slowly, trying to fully wrap his brain around the situation.

Eddie shrugged.

"Watching you lose it like that was, um, really hot," Eddie said

sheepishly.

Richie laughed, dragging Eddie into his arms and kissing the top of his head.

“And to think, I was the one worried about come in my pants,” he teased.

Eddie swatted at him halfheartedly.

“Shut up, Tozier.”

5. Chapter Five

None of the Losers were shocked when Richie sent a pic to the group chat of Eddie asleep on his chest, captioning it “nap time for the cutest Spagheds around.” It was an innocent picture, but it was more than enough for them to put two and two together.

Bev: FUCKING FINALLY!

Mike: Jeez, about time you guys figured it out.

Bill: Didn't we have a bet going about this? Does anyone remember what it was? Did I win? I feel like I did.

Ben: Congrats guys! :)

Eddie: Wow, not even gonna pretend you guys are surprised? Now seems like a good time to tell you all I'm gay I guess. Also Richie, I'm gonna kill you, I can hear you giggling from the other room.

Richie: Forgive me, my love. You were just so cute, I had to share!

Bev: Oh man. I take it back. Go back to being just friends. You're gonna be way more insufferable as a couple.

Mike: Stop it, you guys are disgusting. I can't take it.

Bill: Seriously guys, did I win the bet?

Ben: Happy for you guys :)

Eddie: Richie, unlock the fucking door so I can end your ass!

Richie: Kinky ;)

“Richie, open the damn door!” Eddie yelled, twisting the knob even though he knew it was locked.

“Not until you promise you only want to come in so you can shower me with kisses!” Richie called back. He heard Eddie sigh from the other side of the door.

“Fine. I promise I won’t kill you. But...we need to talk.”

Richie unlocked the door, yanking it open, a panic stricken look on his face. *We need to talk* . The worst four word phrase in the English language, reserved for when you wanted to let someone down easy. But that couldn’t be Eddie’s reason. The universe wouldn’t be so cruel as to take Eddie away from him so soon after the two of them had finally gotten their shit together.

“I’m sorry,” Richie blurted. “I didn’t realize the picture would make

you so mad. Please don't leave me. I-I didn't mean--

“Whoa, whoa, Richie. Slow down,” Eddie said, stepping into the room and walking Richie backwards to sit on the bed. He stood between Richie's legs, running his hands through Richie's unkempt waves that were in desperate need of a trim, and tipped his head back to press a lingering kiss to his lips. “I'm not going anywhere. I'm sorry. We need to talk probably wasn't the best choice of words, even if that's exactly what we need to do.”

Richie let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding. He ran his fingers along the back of Eddie's knee and leaned into the hand that Eddie still had in his hair, humming softly. Before Eddie, back when he was sneaking around for quicks fucks in dingy dive bar bathrooms, the fingers people buried in his hair would tug and yank until his eyes were watering. Not that he was averse to a little hair pulling, but he found he liked the softness of Eddie's touch. It made him feel like he mattered.

“Where do we go from here, Richie?”

The question startled Richie out of his revelry. It was a conversation they had both been avoiding. Richie was cleared for air travel as of a week ago, but neither he nor Eddie seemed keen to leave. Staying in Portland together, in the house that Richie had rented, they were safe. But outside of the house...the minute they stepped off the front porch it was real. All of this. This thing between them. Richie wanted it to be real more than anything, but change was never easy.

“I have a life in New York,” Eddie said before Richie could even attempt to formulate an answer. “I have a job that I love, even though I'm sure it sounds boring to you. And they like me there. A

lot. I mean, they let me drop everything to go back home and fight a demonic clown, not that they knew about that part. When you got hurt, they didn't even bat an eye when I said I needed to use all the vacation days I'd saved up to take care of a friend. It's a good job. A steady job and I--

"You could move to LA with me!"

Eddie gaped at Richie.

"Did you not just hear what I said? I have a job! I can't pack it all up and move across the country with you!"

Okay, he had a point. Richie might have jumped the gun on that one a little. But with Eddie talking about New York, he'd panicked a little. The idea that they would go back to being a couple thousand miles away from each other had Richie forgetting how to breathe.

"Sorry. Fuck, I'm sorry. I heard what you said. I did. I know it's not fair for me to ask you to give up the life you've made for yourself for me," Richie said. He pulled Eddie closer and rested his head against the shorter man's chest, clinging tight to his hips. "I just don't want to lose you. Not now that I've finally got you back."

It felt strange to be so serious. Richie's brain was screaming at him to crack a joke to lighten the mood, but he ignored it in favor of holding Eddie close and waiting patiently for him to respond.

“You’re not gonna lose me, dumbass,” Eddie murmured, pressing a kiss to the crown of Richie’s head.

Richie snorted.

“I’m not sure how you managed to make dumbass sound like an endearment.”

Eddie chuckled into Richie’s hair.

“Years of practice when we were kids. You’re lucky I found your dumbassery adorable,” Eddie said, giggling when Richie blew a raspberry into his neck. “Gross man, you got spit all over me!” he whined.

Richie arched a brow at his boyfriend.

“You didn’t seem to mind my spit all over your--

“Oh my god, I don’t know why I put up with you.”

Eddie pushed himself out of Richie’s arms and moved to the closet to grab a sweater. It had gotten a little colder because Maine weather was as unpredictable as it always had been. He dragged on a green cable knit sweater that Myra had gotten him for Christmas the previous year. She may have been a terrible wife, just like Eddie had been a terrible husband, but she did have good taste when it came to

what looked best on Eddie.

“Because you love me,” Richie said, crowding behind Eddie and kissing his neck, his hands finding his way underneath the sweater he’d just pulled on.

Eddie hummed, letting his head fall back against Richie’s shoulder, his hands covering Richie’s where they were pressed against his stomach.

“Yeah. I do.”

XXXXXX

Richie went back to LA.

Eddie went back to New York.

They had an overly dramatic goodbye at the airport, complete with Richie falling into Eddie’s arms and crying into the curve of his neck while Eddie blushed ten shades of red and tried to calm Richie down because “seriously, Rich, people are staring.” Despite their promise to meet up again soon and to call each other everyday, it was hard. Long distance sucked and within a month Richie was ready to crack.

Richie tried to remember how he used to go about his day to day life without Eddie. Now that he remembered Bill, they met up for drinks

once a week which was nice and helped to keep him sane. And he had his job, of course. His manager nearly had a heart attack when Richie told him that he wanted to start writing his own material. He left out the bit where he was also planning to come out onstage. Steve would have to wait to find out along with everyone else.

So really, it was fine. Now that Richie had the green light to write his own stuff, he had plenty of things to keep him busy. His next show was in a month. Even though he was terrified at the prospect of getting up onstage and coming out to the world, he knew it was time. He'd felt so free coming out to Eddie and the rest of the Losers. Like he was finally allowed to be himself. And now that he'd put one foot out of the closet, he was ready to take the fucking leap and put the closet behind him forever.

He had plans to fly Eddie out for the show. Not just Eddie actually, all of the Losers. There was no way he was doing this without the lot of them there because if everything went to shit, at least he'd have his best friends and his boyfriends for support.

Richie was tucking his memo pad into his desk, getting ready to call it a night, when his doorbell rang. He frowned. No one came to his house this late unless he was ordering take out. He waited a moment to see if whoever it was would go away, jumping when the bell rang again. Richie sighed and pushed himself up from his desk chair. He made his way through his too big for one house to the front door, pulling it open.

"Bill? What are you doing here? Don't you and Audra usually turn in around nine?" he asked, unused to seeing Big Bill himself standing on his front porch.

Bill rolled his eyes, but he was laughing too, shaking his head at Richie's usual antics.

"You should be nice to me, Tozier. I brought you a present."

Richie's frown deepened.

"Well gosh, Big Bill. Not that I don't appreciate the offer but you see I'm sort of taken and last time I checked you're married so--

"Oh for fuck's sake you asshole, you're ruining this whole surprise."

Richie's eyes went wide in disbelief as Eddie came around the side of the porch from where he had apparently been hiding, arms crossed and an annoyed look on his face.

"E-Eds what are you--h-how are you--Bill, did you--

"I'm gonna let Eddie fill you in on the details," Bill said, his hands up in surrender. "But he called me and asked me to pick him up from the airport since he had your address but wasn't familiar with LA. So, since I hand delivered you your favorite person in the world, I'd say that makes up for all the birthdays I missed over the last twenty-seven years."

Richie was only half listening to Bill. His eyes were still trained on Eddie. Eddie who had let his stubble grow out and was well on his

way to a beard which was doing things to Richie that he couldn't even begin to put into words. He looked good. Really good.

"Right," Bill started, taking a few steps back. "I'm gonna get out of the way of the intense bedroom eyes because I can see the two of you are more than ready to explore each other's tonsils. Uh, call me later and we can all do dinner at some point or something."

"Thanks, Billiam! Don't you listen to a word those critics say! You're not a worthless two bit hack! You're the best! The best!" Richie called after him, his brain finally coming back online.

Bill flipped him off over his shoulder, but Richie didn't see it because Eddie was pushing into his space and practically dragging Richie into his own house like he owned it. If that turned Richie on then that was his business.

Eddie dropped his bags the second the door was closed, standing up on his tiptoes and wrapping his arms around Richie's neck. Richie's arms circled his waist and he hooked his chin over the shorter man's shoulder, his hand cupping the back of Eddie's neck.

"Eds, what are you doing here? I mean, not that I'm not pleased as fucking punch that you're here, but I thought you had work. Weren't you up for some big promotion? What are--

"I got a job transfer," Eddie cut him off, peppering kisses up Richie's neck and curling his fingers into the fabric of Richie's shirt as he tried to yank him even closer.

“A transfer? Here? Y-You transferred here?” Richie asked, trying to think through the lust induced fog in his brain, but it was almost impossible with the way Eddie was nibbling at his ear.

“Yeah. Yeah I did, Rich. I woke up one morning a few weeks ago and I realized that I was sick and tired of waking up alone, without you beside me. So I went to my boss and put in a request for a transfer to the LA office. I can assess risks anywhere. Starting with your house. Did you know that the baseboards in your porch are--

Richie cut off what was sure to be a very impressive Eddie Kaspbrak tirade, in favor of finally dragging Eddie in for a long overdue kiss. Eddie groaned softly into the kiss, letting Richie walk him backwards until they fell in a heap onto the couch.

They broke the kiss, both of them giggling as they tugged at each other's clothes, eager like a couple of teenagers about to do it for the first time.

“I hope it wasn't too presumptuous to assume you'd let me stay with you. I can always get an apartment and we can take things slow like normal people if you'd rather,” Eddie said between kisses, practically clawing at Richie's belt.

“Yes, Eds. That's exactly what I want. I shoved you onto my couch and am trying to have my wicked way with you, only to kick you out and make you find your own place. In fact, screw the reunion sex. Get out of my house, you mooch” Richie teased, finally succeeding in dragging Eddie's shirt off over his head. He froze.

“Holy Mary, mother of--are you fucking kidding me?!” Richie asked, his eyes fixed on Eddie’s bare chest.

Eddie looked down at himself in confusion.

“What do you mean what?! You’re fuckin jack’d man! How do you even--we’re forty!”

“Okay, okay, I get it, enough!” Eddie blushed, pushing himself up a little and reaching for the hem of Richie’s shirt. “Take your shirt off. Fair is fair.”

Richie slapped Eddie’s hands away and crossed his arms over his chest.

“Absolutely not. There’s no way in hell I’m letting you see with without a shirt. We’re just gonna be one of those couples who have sex with their clothes on and the lights off because--

“Oh for fuck’s sake! Richie, I’ve seen you shirtless. I had to wrap your chest, remember?!”

Richie blanched. Right. The gaping chest wound. How could he forget.

“But that didn’t have anything to do with sex,” he reasoned.

Eddie arched a brow.

“What, you think I’m gonna take one look at your dad bod and run for the hills?” Eddie deadpanned.

“Okay, well when you put it that way it sounds--

“Stupid?”

Richie fiddled with the hem of his shirt, his eyes still trained on the ridiculous six pack he couldn’t believe Eddie was sporting. Eddie’s hands covered his and Richie was surprised by the amount of naked affection in the other man’s eyes. Before he could talk himself out of it, Richie tugged his shirt off over his head, resisting the urge to cover himself. He wasn’t usually self conscious about the softness of his belly or the ugliness of the scar that curved around his shoulder and his chest. But Eddie was so beautiful and Richie didn’t want--

“I’m so in love with you,” Eddie murmured, cutting off whatever self deprecating rant Richie’s brain was about to go off on. He slid his hands along Richie’s stomach, up to his chest, letting his thumb brush over one of Richie’s nipples.

“F-fuck,” Richie moaned, his head falling forward to rest against Eddie’s neck. He rocked his hips forward, desperate for at least a little friction, grinning when Eddie gasped beneath him, his own hips

shifting up to press against Richie's.

"What do you want?" Eddie asked, lips close to Richie's ear.

Richie swallowed hard, pulling back enough to look Eddie in the eye. He ran his thumb across the scar on Eddie's cheek, put there by Henry Bowers, and was once again reminded of how lucky he was that Eddie was alive. That Eddie was here with him right now.

"Everything," Richie said, reaching for the button of Eddie's jeans. "I want everything."

XXXXXX

When Richie has pictured his first time with Eddie, and he'd pictured it a lot, he'd always assumed it would be slow and gentle. That the first time Eddie fucked him, he would take his time and make love to Richie, taking him apart bit by bit.

And he was right.

Sort of.

Eddie took his time making sure Richie was ready. Honestly, the copious amount of prep work might have been overkill and by the time Eddie was sliding into Richie, the other man was close to begging.

Okay, fine, there was no close to about it. He was begging. “ *Please, Eddie. Need you now. Please.* ”

Eddie was moving so slowly that Richie was on the verge of tears, which was of course when the other man turned the tables on him.

Years of pent up frustration and longing had left both of them desperate and as soon as Eddie had the all clear from Richie to pick up the pace, he went to *town* . With Richie on his knees, pinned against the back of the couch, Eddie pounded into him hard and fast and so good that Richie was past the point of forming coherent sentences. Anything other than “ *fuck, fuck, fuck* ” or “ *oh god, Eddie, Eddie, Eddie* ” was beyond him.

Eddie laced his fingers through Richie’s, pinning his hands to the couch and using the new found leverage to thrust his hips faster. He was breathing hard, mouth right up against Richie’s ear, making the other man shiver.

“Mmm, s-so good,” Eddie moaned, catching Richie’s earlobe between his teeth. “You feel so good, Richie. I-is it too much? Do you need me to slow down?” he asked.

Richie whined, shaking his head and crying out when Eddie’s teeth sunk into his shoulder.

“Please! D-don’t stop,” Richie pleaded, not caring how desperate he sounded, not when Eddie was giving it to him so good, holding

Richie in place and fucking into him just the way he wanted him to.

“Tell me you’re close. God, please tell me you’re close,” Eddie said, his hips started to stutter as he struggled to hold himself back, intent on making Richie come first.

“Close. So close! J-just a little more! A-ah! I’m, E-Eddie, I’m--” Richie managed before his brain went completely offline, a string of unintelligible moans sliding past his lips as he came hard, spilling onto the couch cushions.

Richie was vaguely aware of Eddie finishing a moment later, his voice breaking as his hips pressed hard one last time into Richie.

They came down slowly. Richie grunted when Eddie’s forehead knocked into his back, between his shoulder blades.

“Uuuugh, that was fucking amazing,” Eddie groaned.

“Then why do you sound so annoyed?” Richie asked.

“Cause now I feel sweaty and disgusting and there’s definitely cum on the couch cushions that I’m gonna have to clean up later but first I need a shower,” Eddie said with a grimace.

Richie smiled fondly, wincing a little as Eddie slipped out of him.

“Okay, Spaghetti. How about we shower together? Conserve water and all that. And then worry about the couch after?” Richie suggested.

Eddie gave Richie a slow up-down as he helped him to his feet, grinning at the fucked out state that Richie was in.

“Sounds good to me. Though I’m pretty sure if we shower together neither of us is gonna get clean.”